

The Role of Higher Education Student Volunteerism in Community Service Through Student
Citizenship Behavior

*(Peranan Kesukarelawanan Mahasiswa Pengajian Tinggi Dalam Khidmat Masyarakat Melalui
Tingkah Laku Kewarganegaraan Mahasiswa)*

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ABSTRACT

The role of student volunteerism within higher education institutions in community service is interconnected with student citizenship behaviour. Student volunteerism is essential in promoting citizenship behaviour and generating beneficial outcomes in local communities. However, there is little emphasis and inconsistent research findings within a research field. Therefore, this review paper explores how student volunteerism will contribute to community service programs by fostering citizenship behaviour. This recent study will provide a review of the literature on the role of student volunteerism and its distinction with citizenship behaviour as well as conceptual in terms of student citizenship behaviour, and to understand its challenge and issues pertaining to student volunteers in community service. Data has been sourced from a review of literature found in journals, articles, and research projects. This study includes an initial analysis of existing literature, which is followed by a content analysis that specifically delves into the development of the concept and the functions of student citizenship behaviour and student volunteerism within community service, aiming to support and maintain their engagement. The future implications of this research may involve aiding educational institutions, communities, and relevant organisations in enhancing volunteerism among higher education students.

Keywords - Student volunteerism, Community service, Student citizenship behaviour

ABSTRAK

Peranan kesukarelawanan pelajar dalam institusi pengajian tinggi dalam khidmat masyarakat saling berkaitan dengan tingkah laku kewarganegaraan pelajar. Kesukarelawanan pelajar adalah penting dalam mempromosikan tingkah laku kewarganegaraan dan menjana hasil yang bermanfaat dalam komuniti tempatan. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat sedikit penekanan dan penemuan penyelidikan yang tidak konsisten dalam bidang penyelidikan. Oleh itu, kertas ulasan ini meneroka bagaimana kesukarelawanan pelajar akan menyumbang kepada program khidmat masyarakat dengan memupuk tingkah laku kewarganegaraan. Kajian terbaru ini akan memberikan tinjauan literatur tentang peranan sukarelawan pelajar dan perbezaannya dengan tingkah laku kewarganegaraan serta konseptual dari segi tingkah laku kewarganegaraan pelajar, dan untuk memahami cabaran dan isu yang berkaitan dengan sukarelawan pelajar dalam perkhidmatan masyarakat. Data telah diperoleh daripada kajian literatur yang terdapat dalam jurnal, artikel, dan projek penyelidikan. Kajian ini termasuk analisis awal kesusasteraan sedia ada, yang diikuti dengan analisis kandungan yang secara khusus menyelidiki perkembangan konsep dan fungsi tingkah laku kewarganegaraan pelajar dan kesukarelawanan pelajar dalam perkhidmatan masyarakat, bertujuan untuk menyokong dan mengekalkan penglibatan mereka. Implikasi masa depan penyelidikan ini mungkin melibatkan membantu institusi pendidikan, komuniti, dan organisasi yang berkaitan dalam meningkatkan kesukarelawanan dalam kalangan pelajar pengajian tinggi.

Kata kunci - Kesukarelawanan pelajar, Khidmat masyarakat, Tingkah laku kewarganegaraan pelajar

INTRODUCTION

Youth involvement in volunteerism is essential for shaping a more compassionate, equitable, and sustainable world, as it is a powerful force for positive change. Youth volunteerism refers to the active participation of young people in various volunteer activities and community service initiatives. According to the National Youth Development Policy (released by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia), youth refers to those whose age range is between 15 years old and 40 years old. The significance of youth's role is highly valued as they are seen as instrumental in a nation's development and have the potential to become exemplary leaders of the future. This targeted group can have a significant impact on the country's development including economic, social, political and others. In Malaysia, higher education students have a strengthened role in various volunteering programs to shape positive youth development. As per Datuk Seri Hj. Mohamed Khaled Nordin, the Minister of Higher Education Malaysia, said, "the responsibilities that are carried by this generation are to develop strong characters, idealism, skills, and leadership qualities, making them valuable assets to society. Merely attending lectures won't suffice. They must actively engage in social activities and volunteering programs to cultivate these traits, ultimately creating a pool of robust and valuable human capital for the nation" (Mardhiyyah Sahri et al., 2013). Therefore, higher education provides the optimal platform for obtaining the finest public service, given that students selected for these programs are among the best and have the potential to become future leaders of the country. Engaging in volunteerism serves as a means to encourage active learning, offering an experience that reinforces their dedication to civic participation, enriches their educational journey, and enhances their ability to make a positive impact on our communities (Mardhiyyah Sahri et al., 2013).

Encouraging youth volunteerism is fundamental to empower them economically, socially, and psychologically. Volunteerism, in essence, involves giving without expecting any form of reimbursement, whether in monetary terms or otherwise (Gombe et al., 2015). The motivating factors may vary across different regions, influenced by indicators such as local needs, geographical location, unique characteristics, social status, economic conditions, and cultural aspects (Gombe et al., 2015).

Several research has indicated that youth engagement in voluntary work is influenced by various factors, including the desire to make new acquaintances and the encouragement and support received from

family, friends, and school, which motivates them to participate in such activities (Nurse-Bray et al., 2022) actively. Furthermore, an increasing number of studies indicate a connection between the reasons why adolescents participate in community service programs, including gender, income, social class, and their psychological, social, and intellectual development (Eley, 2002)

Clearly, volunteering is a widely researched aspect of pro-social behaviour, and the numerous surveys and research studies exploring the reasons behind people's volunteerism consistently find a combination of altruistic and egoistic motives (Eley, 2002). The beneficial influence of volunteering in encouraging citizenship behaviour significantly emphasises the importance of educating young individuals about their rights and responsibilities to the community.

Although considerable efforts have been dedicated to identifying the factors influencing the engagement of the younger generation, including higher education students, in volunteer activities, exploring the essential skills beyond voluntary behaviour that can sustain their interest in making meaningful contributions to their communities is crucial. The core principles of citizenship behaviour theory indicate that the conceptual framework thoroughly encompasses voluntary actions that support adolescents, resembling the patterns observed in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

As demonstrated by organisational citizenship behaviour, employees' voluntary and favourable actions can significantly impact the organisation's performance (Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). OCB is a concept introduced by (Organ & W., 1988) that refers to individual behaviours that are discretionary, not explicitly acknowledged by the formal reward system, and collectively contribute to the organisation's effective functioning. Above all, the notion of OCB is linked to an individual's decisions and behaviours that are not associated with any form of punishment for not exhibiting such action. As revealed by OCB in general management literature, the discretionary supportive behaviours displayed by higher education students during joint volunteerism in community service are akin to the OCB exhibited by employees in traditional organisations. In other words, regardless of the students' direct engagement in community service volunteerism, their voluntary positive behaviour, when combined, can contribute to the efficient functioning and development of the community, much like how employees' OCB contributes to the success of business organisations.

To grasp the significance of voluntary behavior in community service among higher education students,

it is crucial to explore the attributes encompassed by citizenship behaviour, precisely student citizenship behaviour. Therefore, this review paper examines the good discretionary behaviour of volunteerism through citizenship behaviour and determines the role of higher education student volunteerism in community service.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This research will make a valuable contribution by providing additional insights into the inventory of participatory behaviour among higher education students, particularly the younger generation, in assessing the significance of positive behaviour in fostering and sustaining their engagement and interest in community service. Moreover, this conceptual study will provide several recommendations for attracting youth to participate more in community service. In addition, volunteerism is essential for higher education students, as well as skill development, civic engagement, personal growth, networking, and enhancing empathy in society. This study will offer valuable insights into the approaches for cultivating voluntary initiatives and programs within the university among higher education students. In the meantime, this research has offered a valuable perspective on the conceptualisation of positive behaviour, which can aid the university and other stakeholders in bolstering student volunteerism, particularly in community service programs. Equally significant, this study will be advantageous for the country, as the government can derive benefits from the involvement in managing areas, setting objectives, and formulating strategies. Furthermore, it will serve as a future point of reference for researchers exploring the topic of volunteerism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review paper exclusively relies on secondary data from journals, articles, and research projects. Using secondary data will enable researchers to gain insight into the theoretical and substantive aspects of the study. At that point, this pre-existing data presents a feasible choice for researchers with restricted time and resources (Johnston, 2014). Secondary data refers to information or data that was collected by individuals or organisations for reasons other than the present research, and sometimes it comprises a combination of both purposes (Olabode et al., 2019). Further, the content analysis process involves examining and interpreting prior research findings to enrich the comprehension of

how higher education students engage in volunteerism by implementing student citizenship behaviour.

Content analysis is a research instrument pinpointing particular words, themes, or concepts within written texts. This method enables the researchers to draw deductions and derive insights concerning hidden messages, themes, and trends. This review paper uses content analysis to structure and extract meaning from the gathered data, enabling the derivation of practical conclusions about the study. According to Mayring and Fenzl (2019), content analysis should follow four steps in a clear and purposeful process structure. Herein lies the foundational procedure for conducting content analysis in this review paper:

Material Collection

The literature review comprises research papers in the English language on student volunteerism and student citizenship behaviour. Research papers represent a major mode of discussion among researchers; therefore, they are taken as units of analysis. The keyword search was conducted using major databases and library services: Scopus, Emerald, Springer, and Google Scholar.

Descriptive Analysis

An assessment is conducted on the formal characteristics of the material, which serves as the underlying basis for subsequent analysis of its content.

Category Selection

Specific structural aspects, such as the definition and conceptualisation of student volunteerism and student citizenship behaviour in their community service involvement, are applied to the gathered materials.

Material Evaluation

The sample of literature review papers on student volunteerism and student citizenship behaviour has been analysed. The findings are presented and discussed, intending to offer practical guidance and inspire the researcher to conduct deliberate literature reviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nawaz & Makhdoom (2017) identified and explored the antecedents of student citizenship behaviours (SCB), highlighting their importance for academic success and future employment opportunities. The concept of

SCB has not received thorough investigation in the context of volunteerism either. Involving individuals, especially the youth, in volunteering is crucial for revitalising local economies and cultivating community resilience. The study by Eley (2002) has discovered the impact of youth volunteering on citizenship qualities through sports games. The findings have shown significant contributions towards enhancing citizenship and fostering a sense of community among young individuals through community service in sports activities. The program's objective is to encourage and acknowledge a continuous dedication by individuals aged 16-24 to voluntary activities that positively impact the community (Eley, 2002).

Meanwhile, the connection observed between volunteerism and pro-social behaviour in SCB will further reinforce the idea that volunteering serves a significant purpose, particularly among the youth (Stukas et al., 2016).

Furthermore, research focused on volunteerism in the context of student participation emphasises the importance of SCB, which contributes to the continuity of their voluntary actions. Nonetheless, the study conducted by Abeer Mohammed Ghamdhan et al. (2019) exploring the influence of attitudes among undergraduate students in Malaysia on their voluntary

intentions lacks a specific focus on the particular attitude that extends beyond voluntary behaviour. This study aims to comprehend the motivating intentions that lead undergraduate students to engage in voluntary work using the theory of planned behaviour (TPB).

There are limited empirical studies on youth volunteering encompassing the psychological and social aspects of volunteers, their motivations, and the psychological impact of volunteering (Marta & Pozzi, 2008). Furthermore, determining the factors that affect college or university students' intentions to volunteer is still considered a research gap in the current literature (Hyde & Knowles, 2013). Conversely, within the context of volunteerism, both higher education students and youth demonstrate numerous positive behaviours when expressing interest in participating in community service that benefits their local community, even without being prompted or receiving payment from the government.

Thus, in line with the notion of organisational citizenship behaviour, this behaviour is referred to as SCB, which entails positive discretionary actions undertaken by students for the betterment of educational institutions and society at large without receiving rewards or payment for their actions. Student citizenship behaviour and organisational citizenship behaviour

TABLE 1. Dimension and definitions of organisational citizenship behaviour.

No	Dimension(s)	Definition
1	Altruism	Altruism, in general terms, refers to a type of pro-social behaviour characterised by voluntary actions aimed at benefiting the recipient.
2	Conscientiousness	Conscientiousness pertains to the degree of dedication one demonstrates towards their job, surpassing the formal requirements.
3	Courtesy	Courtesy is characterised as behaviour that emphasises preventing issues and taking essential measures to minimise the impact of problems in the future.
4	Civic virtue	Civic virtue is described as employees acknowledge their role within the institution and willingness to take on work-related responsibilities by actively participating.
5	Sportsmanship	Sportsmanship is described as the level of employees' readiness to endure less-than-ideal organisational circumstances without complaints and sacrificing their personal interests.

share some similarities. Still, they differ in that student engagement and community service programs is more casual and informal, whereas the relationship between employees and their organisations is formal.

The article review by Organ & W. (1988) identified five dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviour in management that highlight employees' voluntary behaviour in organisations, including altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship. The table below outlines the definition of each dimension in organisational citizenship behaviour, as proposed by (Organ & W., 1988). These dimensions can also encourage higher education students to participate in volunteer activities, similar to how employees engage in such activities within an organisational setting (Eley, 2002).

Based on Organ & W. (1988) and Eley (2002) studies, this current study indicated that the level of voluntary behaviour displayed by higher education students in community service programs could be emphasised through the implementation of SCB that will help them become responsible and engaged citizens and prepares them to make meaningful contributions to society beyond their academic pursuits.

CONCLUSION

This study has covered several aspects of practical importance for individuals or organisations seeking to recruit and retain young volunteers. Student volunteerism is a potent catalyst for personal and community growth. It positively impacts the communities it serves and offers valuable learning opportunities and personal development for students. Encouraging and endorsing student volunteerism can yield widespread benefits for both students and the communities they serve. Moreover, institutions that foster and endorse such initiatives stand to gain enhanced reputation, stronger community ties, and increased student engagement, all of which contribute to the institution's overall performance. Volunteering offers students a platform to develop and hone various skills that are valuable in their academic and professional lives. Students often acquire leadership, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills through their volunteering experiences. These skills benefit the students individually and contribute to the institution's intellectual capital and human resource potential. Perhaps by conceptualising student citizenship behaviour, future studies can uncover the range of discretionary actions that higher education students can undertake and identify their potential for

engaging in voluntary behaviour.

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